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SFPD Warns Public of Financial Scam

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San Francisco police are alerting residents of an ongoing series of scams resulting in financial loss to unsuspecting victims. The scam occurs when one suspect approaches a victim who is always alone. The suspect asks for directions and convinces the victim to assist him in getting to the destination. While en-route, the suspect mentions a letter regarding an inheritance which requires the suspect to donate a large sum of money. He then elicits help from the victim to distribute these charitable donations. At this point in the scam, the main suspect brings in a second suspect whose role is to make the victim feel more comfortable with the situation.

The suspects discuss the need for “Good Faith” money as a means of proving that the involved parties have their own money and will not steal the alleged inheritance money intended for “charity.” The second suspect leaves and returns with what appears to be a large sum of money. Both suspects place a roll of what appears to be money into a “sacred cloth” which the second suspect takes to another location.

The suspect then convinces the victim to present, “Good Faith” money in order to show that the victim is trustworthy. He accompanies the victim to his/her bank, waiting outside for the victim to withdraw money. When the victim returns, the suspect takes the victim’s cash and one of the supposed money rolls that the suspect was carrying and wraps them in a “sacred cloth” and places it in the victim’s car trunk. The suspect tells the victim to drive around the block as a “measure of trust” and to not look at the money right away. The victim later looks in the trunk only to discover rolled up newspaper, wrapped in a bandana and that the suspects have fled.

The suspects have both been described as older, African American males, between the ages of 40 to 65 years of age. They are typically dressed in slacks and a jacket. In most cases the first suspect had some sort of accent, and claimed to be from South Africa.

San Francisco Police would like to remind the public of the following

- Use caution when approached by any strangers under these described circumstances.
- Do not speak to strangers offering good fortune or unusual offers.
- Do not give money or valuables to strangers that are offering you a deal too good to be true.

If approached by any of these suspects with similar inquiries, please call 911.

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